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NME PEOPLE OF THE YEAR

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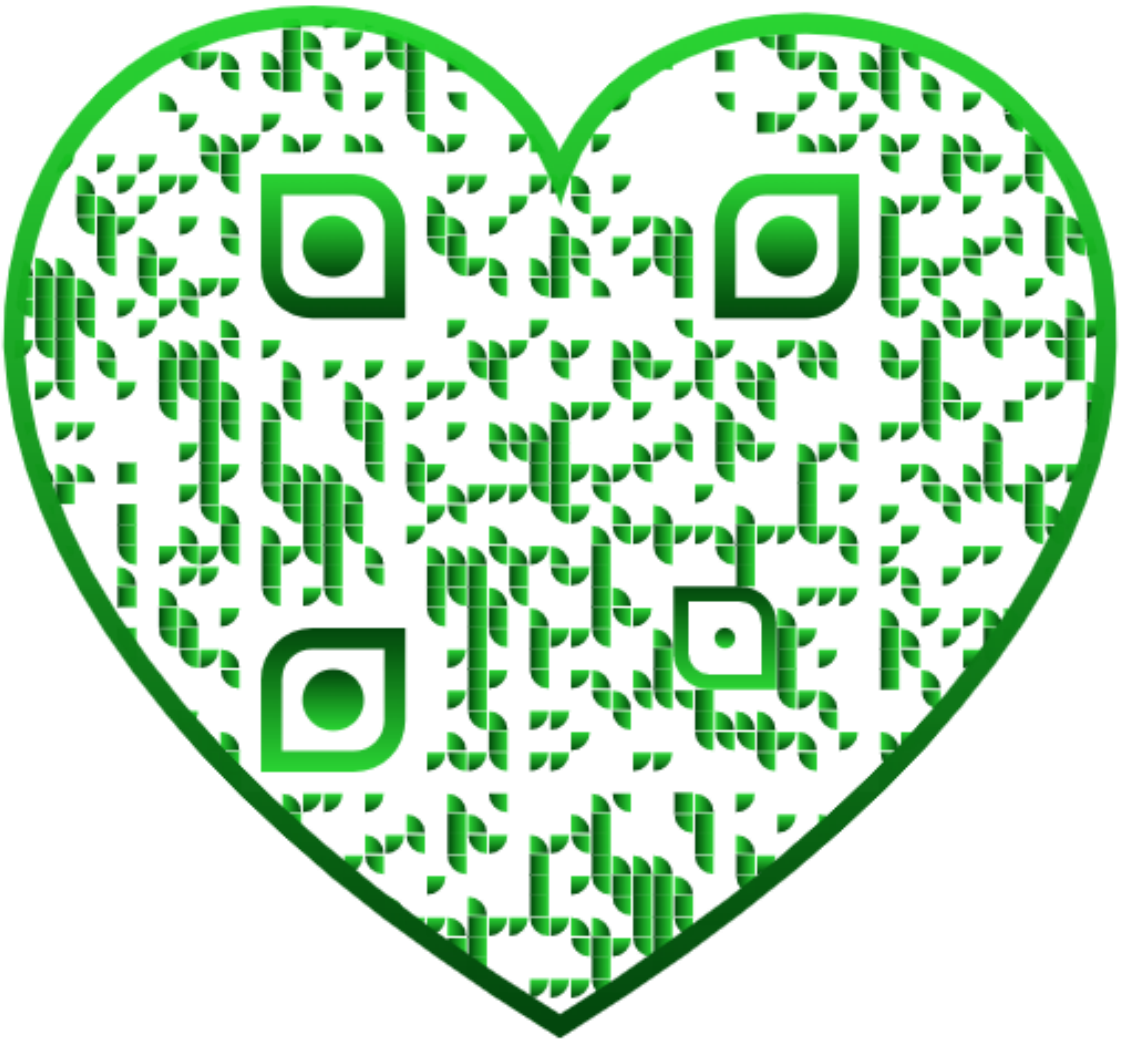
2015



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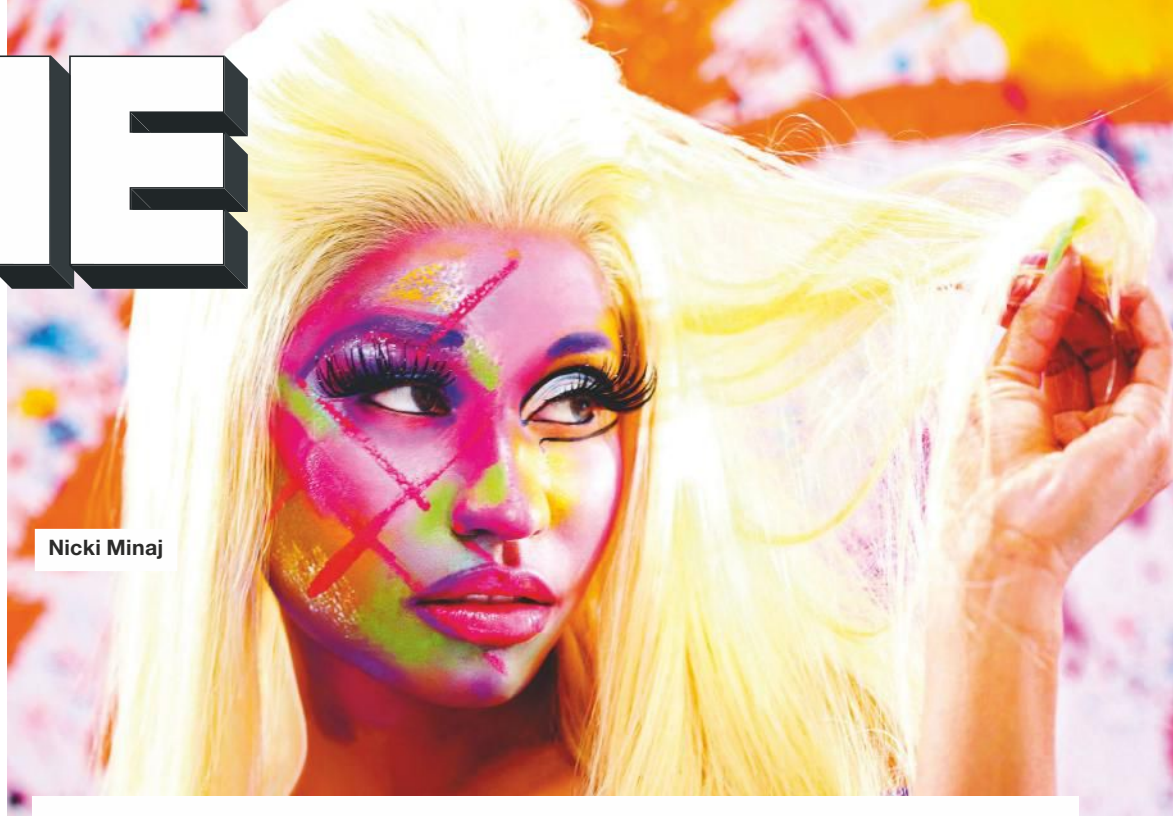
NME



Nicki Minaj

Hello...

WELCOME, PALS, TO the last *NME* of the year.

It has been, without doubt, one of the most significant 12 months in this mag's history. In September, after 63 years as a paid-for publication, we started dishing out *NME* for free. The four months since have been game changing for us.

What better way to celebrate such a giant shift in the way we do business than with our first ever People Of The Year issue, in which we shine a light on the 12 humans who've had the biggest impact on your lives in 2015.

Whether they've exposed gross inequality in Hollywood, worn dildos on stage in the name of freedom, resurrected a much-loved film franchise or just cracked gag after gag, they've all made a difference.

Enjoy it. And remember: Merry Crimbo, Happy New Year, eat, drink and watch telly.

See you in January.

TOM HOWARD
Deputy Editor
@tomahoward

COVER STORY

14 People Of The Year

Taylor Swift. Miley Cyrus. JJ Abrams. Skepta. Adele. Jennifer Lawrence. Noel Gallagher. Mhairi Black. The Libertines. Mathieu Flamini. Nicki Minaj. Kendrick Lamar

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AGENDA

WHAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT THIS WEEK

Life On The Road – FYI

THE CAST Gervais, plus former Razorlight and We Are Scientists drummer Andy Burrows, rapper-turned-actor Doc Brown and, for some reason, Peter Andre.

THE PLOT Twelve years after *The Office* ended, hapless David Brent is now a travelling salesman taking his band, Foregone Conclusion, on tour.

THE RUMOURS Coldplay's Chris Martin is working on the soundtrack. An album will accompany the film. David Brent playing Glastonbury "could happen".

***Life On The Road* is set for release in August 2016**

On set with David Brent

Last month, we joined Ricky Gervais as he began filming *Life On The Road* in London and Slough

How many David Brent songs are in the film?
Ricky Gervais: "There's a few we did for *The Office*, like 'Free Love Freeway', and also 'Paris Nights' and 'Spaceman Came Down'. But you get to hear the second verse of those two, which you didn't on *The Office*. The rest are all new, and there's seven or eight of them."

How do you go about writing these songs?
"Usually I write them with someone in mind that Brent's ripping off. 'Free Love Freeway' was a Springsteen song, and 'Slough' was meant to be Bowie or Radiohead. I sent 'Slough' to Bowie, and he said, 'It's great, I'd like a see a whole album of you singing about the towns of Great Britain.'"

Do you enjoy coming up with the music?
"I love it. And there's such a get-out clause because we've got irony on our side. We can sing crass lyrics or use derivative chords that haven't been used since the '80s, but they're so much fun!"

INTERVIEW: NICK LEVINE

NME AWARDS TOUR 2016 WITH Austin – LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD –

Brothers gonna work it out

The latest in a series of profiles with all the bands playing the NME Awards Tour 2016 with Austin, Texas. This week: Drenge

History

Brothers Eoin and Rory Loveless burst on to the scene in 2013, clattering out of Derbyshire with their riotous self-titled debut. They became a trio with the addition of bassist Rob Graham for second album, this year's 'Undertow' – a bleakly brilliant progression from their earlier DIY-punk sound.

Best tunes

Oof – where to begin? Their last album had the majestic Fleetwood Mac-meets-Hawkwind belter 'The Woods' and the Ramones-y 'We Can Do What We Want'. 'Bloodsports' and 'Backwaters' are their debut's hottest offerings.

Legendary gigs

Drenge have just finished an action-packed tour of North America, supporting fellow grungers Wolf Alice. Eoin's online tour diary makes for excellent reading, full of accidental chats with Kim Gordon and enough In-N-Out Burger visits to warrant a triple heart bypass.

Biggest WTF moment

Kanye West befriended the brothers on an episode of *Later… With Jools Holland* in 2013. After they performed, Kanye strode over and complimented the chaps on the aggression and directness of their sound.

Next time: Bugzy Malone

The dates

See Bloc Party, Drenge, Rat Boy and Bugzy Malone, here:

January 29 Great Hall, Cardiff
January 30 O_2 Guildhall, Southampton
February 1 O_2 Academy, Bristol
February 2 Rock City, Nottingham
February 4 O_2 Academy, Newcastle
February 5 Barrowlands, Glasgow
February 6 Academy, Manchester
February 8 O_2 Academy, Leeds
February 9 Corn Exchange, Cambridge
February 11 O_2 Academy Brixton, London
February 12 O_2 Academy, Birmingham

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Vote in the NME Awards 2016 with Austin, Texas

How did The Maccabees vote?

ORLANDO WEEKS

BEST BRITISH SOLO ARTIST *supported by* PILOT
Noel Gallagher
"I love 'The Dying Of The Light' and 'The Right Stuff' off the new record."

BEST INTERNATIONAL SOLO ARTIST
Kendrick Lamar
"He's made one of the albums of the year, one that will last a very long time."

FELIX WHITE

BEST BRITISH BAND
Foals
"I wish nothing but good things for this band. The shows I saw of theirs over the summer were great!"

BEST INTERNATIONAL BAND *supported by* Austin – LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD –
The Strokes
"A vote for past glories and sort of 'fingers-crossed-for-things-to-come' vote."

NME AWARDS 2016 WITH Austin – LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD –

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GOOD WEEK

Borat

The king of inappropriate behaviour returned to promote creator Sacha Baron Cohen's 2016 film *The Brothers Grimsby* on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*. Funny!

Willow Smith

The teenage daughter of Will Smith surprise released her debut album, 'Ardipithecus', on December 11.

Donald Trump

A petition to ban him from the UK after his call for a "complete shutdown of Muslims entering the US" has hit 550,000 signatures.

The Weeknd

The R&B star is facing a copyright lawsuit after he allegedly sampled the score from 2013 film *The Machine* in his single 'The Hills'.

BAD WEEK

PICS: ED MILES, JONATHAN DEAN, JORDAN HUGHES, GETTY REX

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Katherine Ryan

OFF THE TV AND IN YOUR FACE

THIS WEEK

My person of the year

POLITICS WENT pop in 2015. UKIP's manifesto turned the UK General Election into a veritable pantomime, casting pint-swilling Nigel Farage as the charismatically racist villain. We nearly lost Scotland, and were introduced to the SNP's Mhairi Black, the youngest MP elected to the House of Commons since the 1800s. Leftists cheered on their dark horse, Ed Miliband, who was arguably bumped from news headlines by Kim Kardashian's bare arse on the cover of *Paper* magazine. David Cameron emerged victorious, and we all went back to our lives, quietly supporting foodbanks as the Tories cut benefits in favour of bombing Syria with our money.

Many of us are quite stupid. Our attention spans have been reduced by the immediate gratification provided by smartphones and social media. For this reason, we need *big, obvious, shiny* archetypes as political figures, or else how can we possibly be expected to give a sh*t? Jeremy Corbyn confuses the public because he looks like a librarian and enjoys baking bread. Pfft, that's no fun. We want scandals! Headlines! Children being left behind in pubs!

That was all well

and cute until Donald Trump came along. What started as a joke has grown into a full-blown apocalyptic threat. The American celebrity businessman has a CV that's basically identical to Paris Hilton's but for some reason, he's being taken seriously as the leading Republican candidate in the US Presidential race. He grabs a mouth-breathing audience with soundbites like, "She does have a very nice figure… If Ivanka weren't my daughter, I'd perhaps be dating her." Recently, Mr Trump called for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States. Hang on a minute, is Donald Trump actually ISIS? Because he's got 'Death to the West' written all over him. He's done more for their recruitment efforts than an eternity of virgins ever could.

Our own hatespeech-monger, Katie Hopkins wrote a column for *Daily Mail Online* defending Mr Trump's statements, but I think she was being cleverly subversive. She said, "Look guys, I'll stand with Trump on this one and everyone will see that he must be a complete prick like me." *But it didn't work.* We've got to fight fire with fire. And I'm not talking bombs: we need to get inside the simple, frightened minds of the rednecks of this world with a celebrity; someone they'll recognise off the telly; someone to rival Trump in terms of star-status and inflammatory interviews.

I am behind Kanye West for American President 100 per cent. He's our only shot. Married to the most powerful woman in mainstream media, he makes beautiful children and comes with his own built-in Messiah complex. He goes jogging in Lanvin, won't listen to rap in his own apartment because it's "too nice", says he's too busy writing history to read it, he strives for dopeness, and describes his greatest pain in life being that he will never be able to see himself perform live.

That's my candidate. Kanye West. My person of the year. And hopefully, the one to deliver us from evil.

"I am behind Kanye West for American President 100 per cent"

PHOTOGRAPHY BELLA HOWARD. STYLING JEN MICHALSKI-BRAY. HAIR & MAKE-UP FIONA EUSTACE. DRESS BY MARY KATRANTZOU. SHOES BY MALONE SOULIERS. CUFF AND EARRINGS ALL BY LOLA & GRACE. BLUE RING BY MISSOMA. ALL OTHER RINGS BY CARAT. PIC: REX FEATURES

Katherine Ryan's high five

Ways you can be more like Kanye in 2016

1 Choose a region and say your partner is the hottest person in it. "My husband is Cardiff's most beautiful – wait – Wales' most beautiful man of all time, ever!"

2 Decide who cares about your race and call out anyone who doesn't. "My postman doesn't care about white people!"

3 Stop reading. You haven't got time to learn history when you're busy making it.

4 Know your worth! No one is doing more for you than you are doing for them.

5 Be the No.1 living and breathing rock star. You are God's vessel.

AC/DC

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THINGS WE LIKE

CHRISTMAS THREADS OF DESIRE

You won't like me when I'm Christmassy
Pre-empt the family punch-up with this bundle of festive fury – the Hulk as an elf. **£15.95**

I snogged her on Alderaan...
Star Wars season hots up as Han and Leia sneak a shifty tongue sandwich ahead of The Force awakening once more. **£24.95**

Warm me up!
If you're planning to peacock-strut around the dinner table before slumping into a corner to inject yourself with stuffing, this Rolling Stones sweatshirt will make the perfect attire. **£24.95**

Back in black (or grey)
For those about to slob, salute them with an AC/DC 'Have a Rockin' Christmas' jumper. Hell's (jingle) bells! **£32.95**

People = snuggly
This Slipknot Christmas sweater looks perfect for relaxing in after riding a hydraulic drum riser through a column of fire. **£24.95**

Knitrod
Be prepared with this Green Day jumper, which can be adapted into a makeshift straight-jacket if granddad gets too rowdy. **£24.95**

Pullovers from hell
Pantera's evil, chunky hug of skull-and-crossbones wooliness references their 'Cowboys From Hell' album. **£24.95**

5 seconds of sweater
Aussie popstars 5 Seconds Of Summer's festive pullover should help warm any hearts that are broken this Christmas. **£24.95**

Mistletoe and whine
Snow – and blood! – rains down on this woolly tribute to Welsh rockers and emo types Bullet For My Valentine. **£24.95**

Paradise jumper
This Guns N' Roses jumper is literally covered in guns. And roses. Not subtle, but cosy nonetheless. **£24.95**

And for your noggin...
Pretend you're Dappy on a psychotropic bender in this wild-ass Red Herring bobble hat. **£18** *debenhams.com*

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YOUR TOWN. YOUR MUSIC. YOUR STYLE

What's on your Headphones?

THIS WEEK

Portsmouth

"It's a small place, but everyone's really proud to live here"

‹ Lydia Wolfe
23, hairdresser

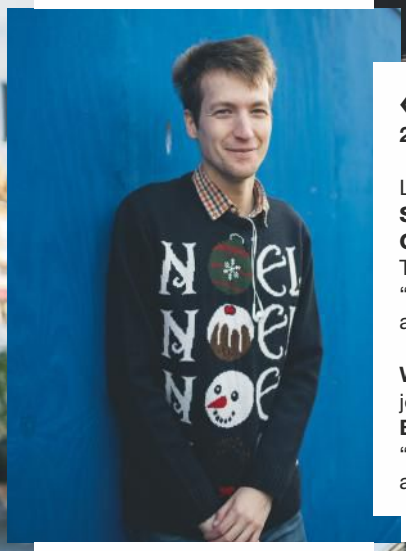
Listening to:
DEAFHEAVEN
New Bermuda
"I'm not into metal at all, but they've completely converted me. They are so, so good."

Wearing: Leopard-print coat from eBay, Dr Martens dress, creepers from a charity shop.
Best thing about Portsmouth: "It's a community. It's a small place, but everyone's really proud to live here, so they make it a really nice place to live."

Lou Lapin ›
32, apprentice tattoo artist

Listening to:
MARTIN COURTNEY
Many Moons
"Martin's the lead singer of Real Estate, who are a band that I love. It's really sleepy, happy, beautiful music. I love it to bits."

Wearing: H&M T-shirt, charity shop dungarees, tote bag from Tofu Cute.
Best thing about Portsmouth: "There's a brilliant music scene, and living by the sea is beautiful all year round."



‹ Elliot McRae
22, student

Listening to:
SKINNY LISTER & BEANS ON TOAST
This Christmas
"It's a Christmas song, so it makes a lot of sense at this time of year!"

Wearing: Primark jumper, Topman jeans.
Best thing about Portsmouth: "The Wedgewood Rooms – it's a good venue."

PHOTOS: TOM LANGFORD

Robert Addison ›
32, works in a record café

Listening to:
THEE OH SEES
Web
"I absolutely love this band – they're the grandfathers of garage rock, from San Francisco."

Wearing: Levi's jacket and jeans, Southsea's Pie and Vinyl record café T-shirt.
Best thing about Portsmouth: "There's a strain of independence that runs through this city that gives it more character than most places I've visited in the south."

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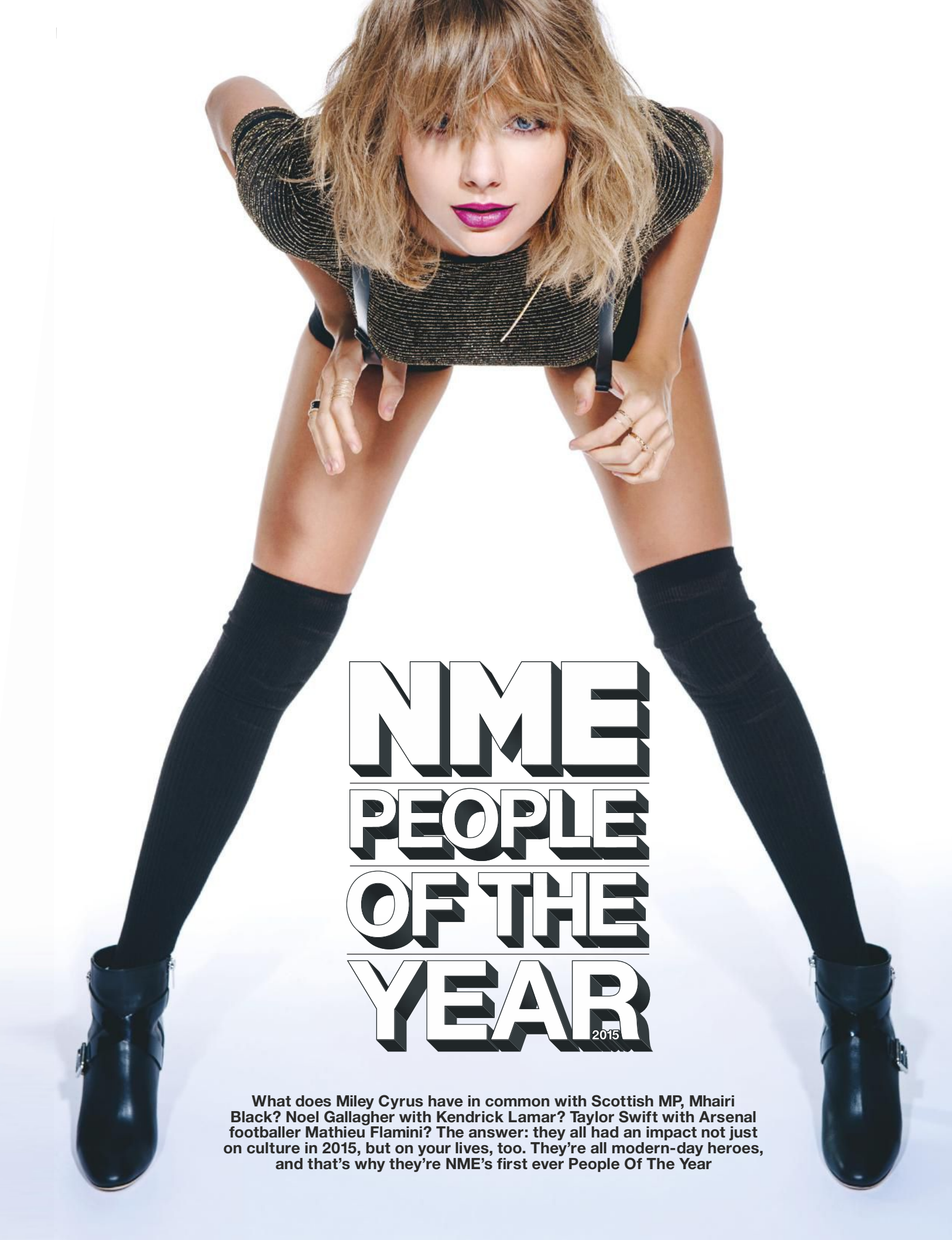

NME PEOPLE OF THE YEAR 2015

What does Miley Cyrus have in common with Scottish MP, Mhairi Black? Noel Gallagher with Kendrick Lamar? Taylor Swift with Arsenal footballer Mathieu Flamini? The answer: they all had an impact not just on culture in 2015, but on your lives, too. They're all modern-day heroes, and that's why they're NME's first ever People Of The Year

For becoming the most powerful pop star on the planet Taylor Swift

WHO: The former teenage country music singer became the biggest – and most influential – pop star on Earth after the enormous success of her '1989' world tour.

WHY: You could argue Adele saved the music industry in 2015. Or you could take the stance that this honour falls to the seven-times Grammy-winning pop-cultural force that is Taylor Swift – the artist who took on Apple and won. The trillion-dollar company was about to introduce its streaming service Apple Music, promising users a free three-month trial, with the caveat that artists would not be recompensed during this period. On the morning of June 21, Taylor published an open letter on her website, politely stating her case. "We don't ask you for free iPhones," she wrote. "Please don't ask us to provide you with our music for no compensation." The letter went viral. By the evening, Apple had announced that artists would indeed be paid during the trial. That, friends, is the influence of an NME Person Of The Year.

Yet Tay would be in the running even if she hadn't pulled off that considerable coup. Her album '1989' came out in late 2014 (selling 1.287m copies in its first week in the US) but continued to dominate music throughout 2015. That's thanks to her stellar stage show, which featured a parade of powerful guest movers-and-shakers. From Mick Jagger, Beck and St Vincent to Justin Timberlake, Fetty Wap, Haim and the entire World Champion US women's football team – not to mention *Friends* star Lisa Kudrow for a duet of 'Smelly Cat' in Los Angeles – her Swifties were treated to a special show every night. By September of this year, the '1989' World Tour had grossed $130million.

There was also a veritable celebrity pile-up in the massive video for her single 'Bad Blood', released in May and featuring everyone from Kendrick Lamar to Cindy Crawford. But there's more to Taylor Swift than celebs and cash (*Forbes* reckons she's worth $200m, since you asked). She's more indie than most indie bands, as she retains the masters of her music and controls her own distribution. Tay's also helping to promote fourth-wave feminism, having experienced what she called a "feminist awakening" after becoming friends with *Girls* creator Lena Dunham.

Which brings us to the overarching theme with Swift: she is just bossing life. Reading an interview with Tay is like reading a self-help book. It makes you want to be a better person – more assertive (as she was with Apple), more generous (she shares her stage with pals) and more self-sufficient (ain't no record label gonna tell Taylor Swift what to do).

Many of us make New Year's resolutions to just be better. Looking back at Taylor Swift's 2015 would be a good place to start.

WHAT SHE SAYS: In October, Taylor told the *NME*: "Not to try and sound like the good witch in *The Wizard Of Oz* or something, but I really do want to do good things with what I have, and that's it. I don't think my brain could cook up very shocking things for the sake of being shocking."

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HER: "But seriously, @taylorswift13 is the leader of a great and beautiful galaxy that I'd live in forever." **– Lorde**

HOW SHE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: She achieved a fairer deal for artists the world over and helped introduce feminism to a new generation. **Jordan Bassett**

JORDAN HUGHES, SHAMIL TANNA

For making rap righteous again Kendrick Lamar

WHO: The 28-year-old Compton rapper behind epic game-changer 'To Pimp A Butterfly'.

WHY: Kendrick began 2015 discussing Michael Brown, the unarmed 18-year-old African-American gunned down in Ferguson, Missouri the previous August. "What happened should've never happened," he said. Similar criticisms of America's institutional racism coursed through 'To Pimp A Butterfly', an album full of vital G-funk, spoken-word and jazz that followed two months later.

The popularity of his music has meant Kendrick's been forced to confront the US right-wing establishment head-on. His performance at the BET Hip Hop Awards in June saw him rapping atop a police car during a performance of 'Alright' (a song containing the lyric, "*We hate po-po, wanna kill us dead in the street fo' sho'*.") The sight had Fox News host Geraldo Rivera sputtering, "This is why I say that hip-hop has done more damage to young African-Americans than racism in recent years." A few days later, Kendrick offered a calm riposte. "How can you take a song that's about hope and turn it into hatred?"

As if to prove the point, the song's chorus, "*We gon' be alright*", was taken up as a chant by protesters against police brutality after a 14-year-old boy was arrested by police at a Black Lives Matter conference in Cleveland. That's the power of Kendrick.

WHAT HE SAYS: "I definitely think God put something in me I'm not even aware of. I know it's there and it has the power to not only conquer what's going on in LA, but also a little deeper than that.''

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HIM: "Kendrick is an inspiration… Your meaning, message and execution are gifts to the world." **– Kanye West**

HOW HE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: 'Alright' became an anthem against police brutality. **Larry Bartleet**

For the year's most beautiful (and unlikely) comeback

The Libertines

WHO: You know these guys. The Likely Lads. Del & Rodney. Withnail & Him. Mick & Keef's naughty noughties counterparts. Yep – reunited ne'er-do-wells Pete Doherty and Carl Barât. Not forgetting John and Gary.

WHY: 2014 might have been when Doherty and Barât wowed London with a batch of brilliant comeback shows – headlining a thriller of an evening at London's Hyde Park to 70,000 fans on a balmy summer's night, for instance – but 2015 was the year British rock's most fraught duo finally patched things up properly and got back to some serious, music-making business.

Decamping to Thailand early in the year to write their first new songs together since 2004, they set the pace for a manic 2015 that few initially thought the band would be able to keep up with. A huge record deal was signed, a new album recorded, Glastonbury was wowed by a surprise Pyramid Stage set and a worldwide tour was booked. In all, the band only missed two shows of the entire run (at London's Electric Ballroom and Manchester's Ritz in September) after Doherty – still dealing with a decade-long addiction to heroin and crack – went AWOL. We'll forgive him that, because the last few times we've interviewed him he's looked, sounded and seemed a million miles healthier than at any time during the previous decade.

Recovery's a long road, and this is where the rejuvenated Libertines really come into play. John, Gary, Pete and Carl are tighter than they've ever been right now, both as friends and as a band. Onstage in Mexico in late November, they appeared closer in spirit to The Beatles than the Sex Pistols, with all the nihilism of 2002-2004 swapped for a purity and 'love conquers all' attitude. They took a collective bow at the end, and it even seemed touching. It's a new aesthetic for The Libertines, and one that suits them.

What it really boils down to, though, is this: way back in 2002, the reason why so many people bought into Pete and Carl was because they offered something different to the commercial, money-minded attitudes that were flooding pop culture. In 2015, even though they're undoubtedly making a pretty penny out of this reunion malarkey, that sense of friendship, unity and admiration for each other still really rings true. Together, they remain an inspiration.

WHAT THEY SAY: "When Carl looked me in the eye and actually believed me when I said I was going to give it a f***ing go, it was like a miracle. Everything else was forgotten." **– Pete Doherty**

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT THEM: "[Pete] was just such an icon in my teenage years and still is to me. I'm so glad he's alive. I really am – there was a long time there where it looked like he might not be." **– Daniel Radcliffe**

HOW THEY MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: By proving that friendship conquers all. **Matt Wilkinson**

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For showing that YOU can change politics Mhairi Black

WHO: 21-year-old Scottish Nationalist MP – the youngest in the country since 1667 – who's putting the world to rights.

WHY: Politicians aren't meant to look like Mhairi Black. The SNP MP for Paisley and Renfrewshire South isn't one of the careerists who normally clog up the Commons – her last job was working in a chip shop. Her victory on May 7 made Black Scotland's youngest MP since 1667, aged just 20 years and 237 days.

Her youth is always the first thing people mention about Mhairi Black, and given the current Government's all-out war on the young (cuts to welfare and housing benefits, no 'living wage' for anyone under 25, raising the cap on tuition fees), it certainly carries a symbolic significance – she is, after all, "the only 20-year-old in the whole of the UK who [George Osborne] is prepared to help with housing". In her maiden speech in the House of Commons, Black made an eloquent, impassioned case against Tory austerity and became a viral sensation: the speech was viewed more than 10m times online.

By her own admission, Black is "fundamentally uncomfortable" in Westminster, and that's precisely why she deserves to be there – she might be an atypical politician, but these days, such people are needed more than ever.

WHAT SHE SAYS: "People realise it's more about the quality of your argument and the quality of what you're saying. They can see past political spin, aesthetic, ages, gender – I can't help what I am. They see it more as a breath of fresh air."

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HER: "I don't like piling pressure on her, but she's so incredibly talented. If she wants to be, she's a future SNP leader." **– Nicola Sturgeon, leader of the SNP**

HOW SHE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: By showing that if you're good enough, you're old enough. **Barry Nicolson**

For taking grime global Skepta

WHO: Kanye-approved MC from Tottenham, north London. 2015 has been by far the best year of his career.

WHY: Skepta began the year much like he would any other: by minding his own business and working on new music, in this case his upcoming fourth album 'Konnichiwa'. His 2014 single 'That's Not Me' was heralded as spearheading a grime revival, but holed up in his parents' Palmers Green house, the 32-year-old rapper (real name Joseph Junior Adenuga) wasn't thinking of world domination.

But on February 25, Skepta found himself at the centre of a flamethrower-touting mob of UK grime MCs (including Novelist, Stormzy and Skepta's brother JME) surrounding Kanye West onstage at the BRIT Awards. That performance thrust Skepta under the spotlight, where he'd remain for the rest of the year. When Kanye followed it up by admitting he and Skepta had been hitting the studio together, the buzz intensified.

In April, Skepta and his mates brought a corner of east London to a standstill with a guerilla gig in a car park to celebrate the launch of 'Shutdown', which went on to be named *NME*'s Track of the Year.

Last month, Skepta tried to explain his seismic year: "I've grown up with all different cultures. Somewhere inside I've always known people all over the world would understand me."

WHAT HE SAYS: "I believe in my talent so much, it's crazy."

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HIM: "Watching Skepta is a reminder that whenever you think you're good at what you do there's most likely people out there that will yam your food." **– Drake**

HOW HE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: Skepta's rise has been based on hard work and good vibes, and you can never have too much of either. **Ben Homewood**

GETTY; JORDAN HUGHES

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For refusing to conform, and celebrating diversity
Miley Cyrus

WHO: Pop star and LGBT rights activist who really doesn't care what you think of her.

WHY: Miley Cyrus is proof that not all former child stars end up in thrall to bad drugs or glumly wading through scripts for afternoon telly dramas. The 23-year-old formerly known as the wholesome Hannah Montana has spent the last few years getting as far away from her whitebread Disney roots as possible, but this year she rose above the controversy to become a sensitive, generous – and above all, fun – spokesperson for the diverse, varied and boundary-pushing youth of 2015 and beyond. Sure, there are limits as to who and what a white, wealthy, Western female can claim to represent – something both Nicki Minaj and Azealia Banks have called her out for – but when it comes to LGBT issues and flicking the Vs at the gross double standards surrounding the way women are represented in the media, she's done a sterling job.

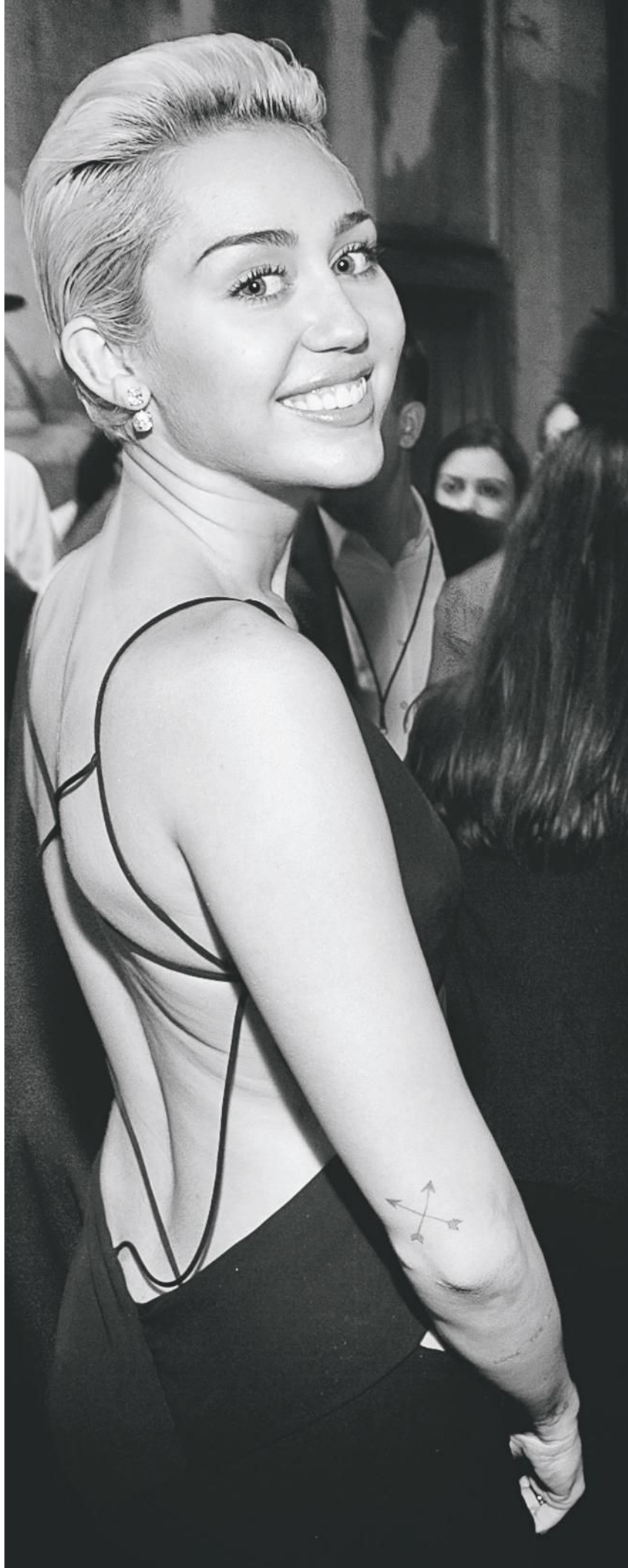
This summer, Cyrus revealed she came out as bisexual to her mother when she was 14, informing the launch of Happy Hippie, her non-profit organisation to create digital support for LGBT youth and their familes, with a particular focus on the homeless. Then there was her take on a world where half-naked women are draped across the covers of magazines, but when a women decides to prance around in the buff on her own terms she's harangued: "I'm a bad role model because I'm running around with my titties out? I'm not sure how titties are worse than guns," she shrugged in a *Marie Claire* interview. Then, to hammer things home, there were Miley's own fashion choices throughout 2015 – plastic boobs, strap-on dildos, day-glo stick-on nipple pasties – attacking a serious issue with a dose of high camp and brilliantly WTF comedy value.

It's enough to make you think that the music became something of a sidenote, but thanks to her intriguing, accomplished Dead Petz collaboration with The Flaming Lips, she managed to impress our stereos as well as our minds.

WHAT SHE SAYS: "I am literally open to every single thing that is consenting and doesn't involve an animal and everyone is of age. Everything that's legal, I'm down with."

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HER: "Who would have thought she'd do a record with The Flaming Lips? And they're gonna perform the album nude… It feels like something that would have happened during the '60s, something someone like Frank Zappa would have done. Good for Miley. Break the mould, girl." **– Elton John**

HOW SHE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: By ripping its clothes off and covering it in glitter.
Leonie Cooper



GETTY

vinyl is back?

it never went away.

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london covent garden // **manchester** brown st //
nottingham broadmarsh shopping centre

For speaking out on race, gender and sexuality Nicki Minaj

WHO: Straight-talking rapper who released no music, but had a profound influence on pop culture.

WHY: When the MTV VMAs failed to nominate Nicki Minaj's 'Anaconda' video for their top prize in July, the American rapper dropped a lightning bolt on Twitter, suggesting their decision may have been swayed by her skin colour and body shape that deviates from the Caucasian ideal. "If your video celebrates women with very slim bodies, you will be nominated for vid of the year," she tweeted.

Her ensuing 'Twitter spat' with Taylor Swift doesn't need rehashing here, but the result of their back and forth is important. Tellingly, Swift admitted she had "missed the point" of what Minaj was trying to say about the entertainment industry's ingrained racism, then apologised to the rapper for her ignorance.

Nicki Minaj knows that speaking out about issues can affect how she is portrayed in the media. "*Let me make this clear: I'm not difficult, I'm just about my business,*" she rapped on 'All Things Go'. But she continues to use her voice to try to make a difference all the same. "Black women influence pop culture so much but are rarely rewarded for it," she tweeted in July. Thanks to Nicki Minaj, many more of us are now aware of this problem and seeking to redress the balance.

WHAT SHE SAYS: "Women in the industry are judged more. If you speak up for yourself, you're a bitch. If you party too much, you're a whore. Men don't get called those things."

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT HER: "You've become an inspiration to women everywhere. I love how you're never afraid to speak your mind." **– Queen Latifah**

HOW SHE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: Started conversations about race and gender in the entertainment industry that keep on getting louder. **Nick Levine**

For using his position to try and save the world Mathieu Flamini

WHO: 31-year-old Arsenal midfielder trying to halt climate change.

WHY: Modern footballers might be hideously overpaid, but at least Mathieu Flamini is investing his millions to try and save the world. In 2008 he became co-founder of geo-energy company GF Biochemicals along with his friend and business partner, Pasquale Granata. Over the last seven years, they've invested millions into the hopes of producing levulinic acid – a synthetic oil substitute made from wood and corn waste – on a commercial scale. Their company was the first to discover a way to mass-produce the acid, meaning it can now be used to replace oil in the manufacture of pharmaceuticals, plastics, cosmetics and more.

Until this winter, though, Flamini kept his involvement in the company a secret from everyone, including his friends and family. Not even his teammates or Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger knew about his enterprising sideline.

While the cynical might view the footballer's involvement as a money-making opportunity, Flamini says he's always had an interest in environmental issues, having grown up "close to nature" on the Mediterranean island of Corsica. "I'm trying to give my contribution to climate change," Flamini modestly states of his personal goals.

WHAT HE SAYS: "So many people tried and failed before so why did we succeed? It's about believing."

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HIM: "Mathieu is a fighter and a winner." **– Arsene Wenger**

HOW HE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: If Flamini's technology takes off, it could help reduce our reliance on depleting fossil resources. **Rhian Daly**

LAUREN DUKOFF/CORBIS OUTLINE, ARSENAL FC VIA GETTY

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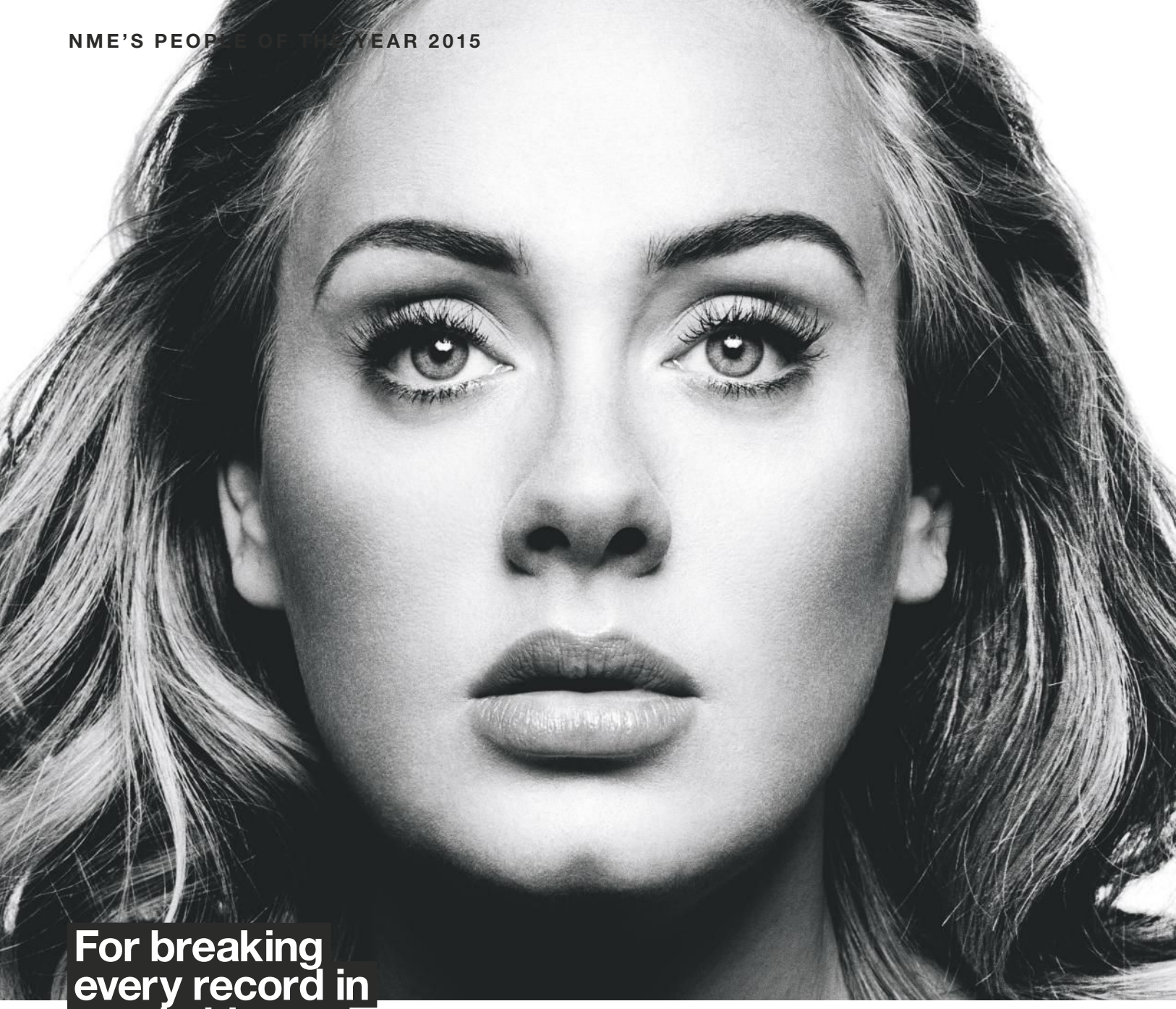

For breaking every record in music history

Adele

WHO: Tottenham singer. Likes a fag and a swear. Sold a few albums.

WHY: There were no prizes for anyone who predicted Adele's return would be a Big Deal. After all, 30-odd million people bought '21'. Adele is a modern music phenomenon. So '25' was always going to be big – but few thought it would be this big.

In its first 48 hours on sale in the US, '25' was selling 12 copies every second. By the end of the week, it had become the fastest-selling album since American chart records began. Here, it broke the same record, knocking Oasis off their 18-year-old perch for 'Be Here Now'. It sold a million copies in 10 days and became the biggest-selling album of the year. On top of that, she blitzed numbers on YouTube and Vevo and stole records from everyone from Britney Spears to SuBo. The internet couldn't make infographics quick enough. Here's how Adele did it:

She writes brilliant, catchy, authentic pop songs Sounds simple. Really isn't.

She respects your personal space Adele isn't Snapchatting you videos of her pug wearing Santa outfits every two minutes.

She's a right laugh Dressing up with a prosthetic chin for that BBC sketch, bashing kids' toys on 'Fallon' and pretending to be a weather forecaster to announce her tour – just a few examples.

She's one of us, man She drives her Mini around London wearing a holey jumper, swearing at other cars.

She refuses to play any game but her own Streaming services? "It probably is the future, but eh."

Next year Adele will play her biggest ever tour, and (fingers crossed) headline Glastonbury. Then she'll disappear again. There are schoolfriends to see, a season of *The Walking Dead* to catch up on and, later, more records to break with the album '29'.

WHAT SHE SAYS: "I'm not arrogant. I'm not gullible… I don't think anything's a given."

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HER: "[This success] represents nine years of her always knowing exactly what she wants to do and exactly how she wants to do it." **– Ben Beardsworth, Adele's label boss**

HOW SHE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: She's pumped enough cash back into the music economy for us all to enjoy the fruits for years to come. Cheers, Adele! **Greg Cochrane**

For being the year's best role model Jennifer Lawrence

WHO: The most powerful actor in Hollywood.

WHY: In August 2014, Jennifer Lawrence was a victim of the biggest intrusion of privacy since the phone hacking scandal, when scores of illegally acquired, compromising photos of (mostly female) celebrities flooded onto the web. But instead of curling up into a ball, she's spent 2015 taking zero sh*t from anyone.

In October, she penned an essay on the Hollywood pay gap between men and women in the industry in which she declared, quite brilliantly, that she was "over trying to find the adorable way to state my opinion", opening a long-overdue conversation that's sent ripples throughout the film world and beyond. Lawrence acknowledged it's difficult to squeeze out too many tears for the poor little millionaire ("I told you it wasn't relatable, don't hate me," she said later), but there's a trickle-down effect. How many women, on reading it, looked around their own office and just wondered?

Whether Hollywood sits up and pays attention is yet to be seen. Lawrence is taking matters into her own hands anyway: she's announced she's to direct her first film in 2016 (on "mental warfare in the '60s"). She has, of course, owned the screen this year with the conclusion of the mega-hit series *The Hunger Games*.

Other things she did in 2015: had a chart hit with 'The Hanging Tree', gave comedian Aziz Ansari a piggyback, went for a night out with a drawn-on monobrow and shared almost none of it on social media. Jennifer Lawrence is, quite simply, a very cool film star.

WHAT SHE SAYS: "I tell my friends to slap me if they ever think I'm getting full of myself."

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HER: "She is a wonderful actress. Her best asset is her level of relaxation." **– Bradley Cooper**

HOW SHE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: By calling bullsh*t on the pay differences between men and women. **Dan Stubbs**

GETTY

For re-awakening The Force JJ Abrams

WHO: Director of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, quite possibly the most anticipated film of the decade.

WHY: As much as it sounds like a dream ticket, directing a *Star Wars* film is actually the most difficult job in cinema. On the one hand, you're forced to work within the restrictions of one of the biggest franchises in history; but if you produce a film that is anything other than perfect you'll be labelled a disappointment. It's a brave, perhaps foolish, person who takes it on.

This issue went to press before *The Force Awakens* was released, so we'll have to reserve full judgement – but in many respects, JJ Abrams has already succeeded. Over the past year and a bit, he has brought the joy back to *Star Wars*. When the world saw that first trailer, reuniting us with Han Solo, Chewbacca and the Millennium Falcon, grown humans were moved to tears with the rush of nostalgia. He made it fun to be a *Star Wars* fan once more. It almost doesn't matter what the final film is like, the anticipation has been the year's greatest cinematic joy. And we have one man to thank for that.

WHAT HE SAYS: "I would love for people, younger people, to see this movie and feel like they see themselves in it. I want them to leave the theatre like I did when I was young, feeling anything is possible."

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HIM: "He's an ideal choice to direct the new *Star Wars* film and the legacy couldn't be in better hands." **– George Lucas**

HOW HE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: Regardless of how the film turns out, Abrams got us e xcited about *Star Wars* for the first time since 1999. **Olly Richards**

For cutting through the crap and making us laugh Noel Gallagher

WHO: The world's greatest interviewee. Also a songwriter.

WHY: On Sleaford Mods "They are like f***ing Brown Bottle in *Viz*. It's just two guys, one clearly mentally ill, shouting about f***ing cider and sh*t chicken. There's no joy in that." ***NME, January***
On Alex Turner "I would rather drink petrol straight from the nozzle at a garage than listen to an interview with Alex Turner from the Arctic Monkeys. Wouldn't you?" ***Evening Standard, February***
On Oasis "If you could sum up my career with films, Oasis was a cross between *The Wolf Of Wall Street* and *Saving Private Ryan* – it was all about struggle and chaos." ***Vogue, March***
On headlining festivals "Just get up there and give it 75 per cent! One always has to save some for the aftershow." ***NME, June***
On his brother "Where's Liam? He's at home looking at himself in the mirror." ***Onstage at Latitude, July***
On the Apple Music launch "Unless there's a f***ing section that says 'Noel Gallagher's music collection' I won't be listening to it." ***The Varvet International podcast, August***
On the United Nations doing sod all in Syria "What on earth was that assembly set up for, if not for things like this?" ***NME, September***
On appearing on Desert Island Discs "I'm reaching the grey army!" ***Q Awards, October***
On the music press "I reckon if Thom Yorke f***ing sh*t into a light bulb and started blowing it like an empty beer bottle it'd probably get 9 out of 10 in f***ing *Mojo*." ***Esquire, November***
On the Paris attacks "It makes music even more special. These f***ing animals are trying to take that sh*t away from us. They hate women. They hate music. That's all I love. It's even more important to put more music out there in the world – to protest that, to counter that." ***Music Feeds, December***

WHAT HE SAYS:"I love interviews because I get to be a gobshite, and I get to do that thing: to be the last of a dying breed."

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HIM: "It's a rite of passage to get a pasting from Noel Gallagher" **– Gus Unger-Hamilton, Alt-J**

HOW HE MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE: By never, ever losing his sense of humour. **Tom Howard**

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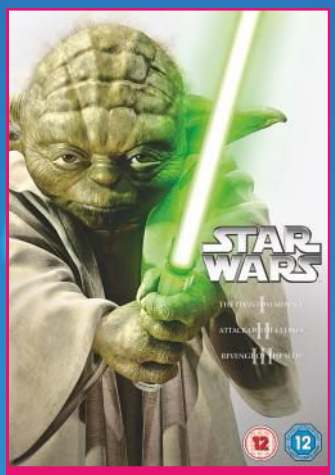

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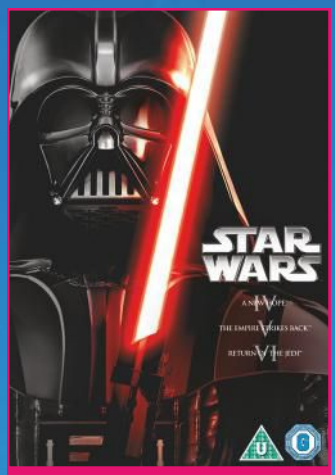

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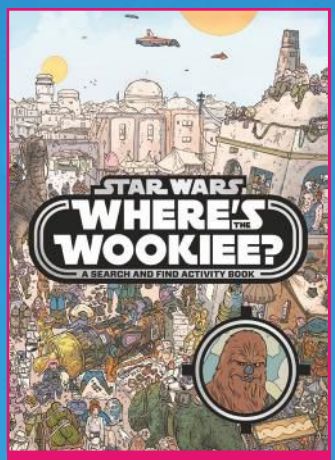

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Best NEW tracks
And when to drop them

THE KILLERS

Best for ripping open your presents
THE KILLERS
Dirt Sledding
"*Pretty girls, Christmas lights/Mistletoe, holy nights,*" Brandon's boys exclaim on their 10th festive song, with a strong whiff of cheese in the air.

Best for your first drink
FRANKIE & THE HEARTSTRINGS FEAT. EDWYN COLLINS
(Too Right) It's Christmas
As chipper as always, the Sunderland tykes bound through their Yule tune like the Christmas cake sugar high has just kicked in.

LOOSE TAPESTRIES

Best for Xmas shopping
LOOSE TAPESTRIES
Can't Wait For Christmas
Vacuum Cloud and The Decision (aka Noel Fielding and Kasabian's Serge Pizzorno) team up on this surreal cracker with a guest rap from Idris Elba.

Best for a post-dinner stroll
THE COURTEENERS
Winter Wonderland
Liam Fray wrote this suitably wintry tune on Norah Jones' piano in 2011, but finally sees a release in aid of Shelter this year.

Best for alt caroling
PUBLIC ACCESS TV
Merry Christmas (I Don't Want To Fight Tonight)
Half of the NYC group give an acoustic take on the Ramones seasonal song direct from their bedroom. DIY *and* festive.

Best for Boxing Day blues
OSCAR
It's Christmas Again
"*It's Christmas again/I still feel the same,*" sighs this bedroom-pop auteur over crunching lo-fi beats and uplifting melodies.

Best for amusing kids
THE SNAILS
Snails Christmas (I Want A New Shell)
Sam and Will of Future Islands reinvent themselves as The Snails, with sax solos and barking lyrics.

THE SNAILS

Best for gluttony
THE BIG MOON
It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year
The girls lend chirp and cheer to Andy Williams' classic, plus added howling.

Best for a food coma
PHOENIX FEAT. BILL MURRAY
Alone On Christmas Day
The Parisian yacht rockers and acting legend imbue The Beach Boys' long-lost 1979 song with sleigh bells, longing and melancholy.

Best for disgracing yourself at the office party
PALMA VIOLETS
Last Christmas On Planet Earth
The Lambeth lads embrace the messier side of Christmas, sounding like they've stumbled out of the pub long past closing time, and into a nearby studio, with whiskey dribbling down their chins.

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DEAN CHALKLEY

XMAS SPECIAL

It's Chriiisstmaaassss!

Covers, cheese and nauseating R&B: we rate the best (and worst) of this year's festive releases

SUMMER CAMP
Christmas
★★★★☆

IN A NUTSHELL: Xmas five-tracker from the husband-and-wife synthpop duo. Covers

of 'Christmas Wrapping' and 'Last Christmas' mingle with reflective new songs: the bittersweet 'Done With Christmas' and 'Here Again', and tinkling tribute to distant loved ones 'I Don't Want To Wait 'Til Christmas'.
MOST BAFFLING XMAS MOMENT: Wham!'s 'Last Christmas' is turned into an unsettling mechanoid buzz, like an office party for drunken robots.

KYLIE
Kylie Christmas
★★★☆☆

IN A NUTSHELL: Military-grade festive cheese from the Kylester, who appears to have been given sparkly legs for Christmas. Bigger-than-big-band bangers abound, featuring a disparate array of guests ranging from the late Frank Sinatra on 'Santa Claus Is Coming To Town' (fair enough) to a surprisingly competent James Corden on Yazoo's 'Only You' (WTF?). The Pretenders' '2,000 Miles' is given a shiversome Minogue massage and experts have certified her barbershop-style reading of 'Santa Baby' "appropriately sexy".
MOST BAFFLING XMAS MOMENT: Iggy Pop throwing spoken-word interjections into a ska-punk rattle-through of The Waitresses' classic 'Christmas Wrapping', playing the unreliable suitor as a snarling, skiing-obsessed nutjob.

LEANN RIMES
Today Is Christmas
★★☆☆☆

IN A NUTSHELL: Warbly country-soul singer Rimes released the six-song 'One Christmas: Chapter One' EP last year and busted out 'White Christmas' back in 2010. Now, the 33-year-old goes 'full Wizzard'. This is a gentle collection of corny standards, carol mash-ups and more considered tracks, such as the touching lonely-at-Christmas ballad 'The Heartache Can Wait' and a cover of soft-rocker Kenny Loggins' 'Celebrate Me Home' with Gavin DeGraw, who's best known round these parts for his theme tune to teenage American sopfest *One Tree Hill*.
MOST BAFFLING XMAS MOMENT: When Rimes plays merry havoc with 'Frosty The Snowman', mashing it into 'Holly Jolly Christmas' and improvising, *"thumpety-thump-thump, look at Frosty go!"*

THE BRAXTONS
Braxton Family Christmas
★☆☆☆☆

IN A NUTSHELL: R&B heroine Toni Braxton recruits her five siblings (the ones from her *Family Values* reality show) to suffocate original seasonal tunes with soporific, synthetic R&B gloss while trilling away like their tonsils are making a bid for freedom. Buy this and have yourself a comatose little Christmas.
MOST BAFFLING XMAS MOMENT: An 'authentic' a cappella 'O Holy Night' that sounds so plasticated and Auto-Tuned it could've been recorded by the first sentient ProTools.

JUDITH OWEN AND HARRY SHEARER
The Best Things
★★★☆☆

IN A NUTSHELL: The *Spinal Tap* and *Simpsons* legend continues his familial tradition of Christmas songs and shows with this three-track EP. His wife, Welsh singer-songwriter Owen, takes on the wintry piano celebrations of the seasons – *"The best thing this Christmas is you,"* she coos on the title track – and Shearer provides the laffs on 'Too Many Notes', a humbug-y pastiche of the R&B vocal acrobatics that the likes of The Braxtons slather over Christmas albums.
MOST BAFFLING XMAS MOMENT: Harry yodelling *"Gonna be singing too many notes this De-ce-eh-eh-eh-em-be-he-he-eeer!"* making you briefly wonder whether they actually did get Sam Smith to guest.

WORDS: MARK BEAUMONT
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Star Wars: The Force Awakens

Out now

12A *Harrison Ford, Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher*

In a nutshell: The cinema event of the decade. Or the year, at least.

Why it'll steal Christmas: We don't know much, but the presence of JJ Abrams, who reinvigorated *Star Trek* at the cinema in 2009, makes us very hopeful it'll be worth the wait.

When to see it: Ideally on release day, but even if you have to wait 'til new year to get a ticket, it should still make you feel seven again.

The holly and the iMax

The films worth dragging yourself to the cinema for this Christmas (and some good ones on the telly too)

The Night Before

Out now

15 *Seth Rogen, Anthony Mackie, Joseph Gordon-Levitt*

In a nutshell: Three lifelong friends celebrate what may be their last Christmas Eve together.

Why it'll steal Christmas: Seth Rogen comedies invariably do the business, and this one has the right combination of Christmas warmth and off-colour gags.

When to see it: With some of your best pals the night before the trek home to the family seat.

Krampus

Out now

15 *Adam Scott, Toni Collette, David Koechner*

In a nutshell: Santa-from-Hell teaches a family to love Xmas.

Why it'll steal Christmas: A hugely fun *Gremlins*-esque mix of horror and comedy, *Krampus* has a bickering family being taught the meaning of Christmas by a horned monster and his evil sidekicks.

When to see it: When you need some respite from enforced cheer.

Daddy's Home

December 26

12A *Will Ferrell, Mark Wahlberg, Linda Cardellini*

In a nutshell: Ferrell struggles to win over his new stepkids, particularly when their biological father Wahlberg shows up.

Why it'll steal Christmas: It's men acting like small children to win the affection of small children, essentially. If gags about being seriously injured or kids being awful are your bag, go nuts.

When to see it: With a hangover, ready for some easy comic relief.

Sisters

Out now

15 *Tina Fey, Amy Poehler, Ike Barinholtz*

In a nutshell: Poehler and Fey play siblings who learn that their parents are selling their childhood home. So they throw a huge party.

Why it'll steal Christmas: The anti-*Star Wars*. Not everyone is interested in galaxies far, far away, but everyone loves these two.

When to see it: When you've had enough sci-fi for this millennium.

Full reviews of these and many more films are on NME.com

On the box

ALAN PARTRIDGE: ALPHA PAPA

December 22, BBC2, 10.30pm

15 *Steve Coogan, Tim Key, Sean Pertwee*

A feature-length romp that sees the world's worst radio DJ stuck in a hostage situation. Funnier than it has any right to be.

STAR TREK

December 19, Channel 4, 8pm

12 *Chris Pine, Zoe Saldana, Simon Pegg*

JJ Abrams' rebooted *Star Trek* universe is enjoyable in a way the old films, full of their dense nerd-fodder, rarely were.

THE INBETWEENERS 2

December 27, Channel 4, 11pm

15 *Simon Bird, James Buckley, Blake Harrison, Joe Thomas*

The lads are in Australia, failing to seduce women and being naked for no good reason.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

Christmas Eve, Channel 4, 2.15pm

U *James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore*

It's the law that on Christmas Eve you have to watch this, the most charming, and surprisingly dark, of festive movies.

DUEL

Boxing Day, The Horror Channel, 6.40pm

12 *Dennis Weaver, Jacqueline Scott*

Spielberg's classic debut sees a motorist stalked by a murderous trucker. It'll put that Xmas traffic hell in perspective.

SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK

New Year's Eve, Film 4, 11.10pm

15 *Bradley Cooper, Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro*

Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence develop an entertainingly volatile romance.

UP

New Year's Eve, BBC1, 2.50pm

U *Christopher Plummer (voice), Edward Asner (voice)*

Maybe the best film Pixar has produced, about an old man using baloons to fly his house into the wilderness. Perfect.

WORDS: OLLY RICHARDS

Matt Berry Does... Happy New You

BBC iPlayer, Friday Jan 1, 2016, available from 9pm

In a nutshell: The owner of TV's Funniest Tonsils continues his series of advice-giving short films.

Why it'll steal Christmas: Because laughter is the best medicine, and after the night *you've* just had, you'll need it.

Neck a shot of eggnog every time... Matt Berry makes a weird noise between words that you couldn't recreate if you tried.

Eat, drink and watch telly

The best shows on TV this Yuletide, and how much foul festive drink to neck while watching them

Charlie Brooker End Of Year Wipe 2015

BBC Two, Wednesday Dec 30, 9pm (NI and Wales, 10pm)

In a nutshell: The grumpy telly-heckler takes a scowly look at the stories that shaped the year.

Why it'll steal Christmas: Amid all the enforced bonhomie, get some sweet, cathartic relief from Brooker's righteous, hilarious rantings.

Neck a shot of eggnog every time... Charlie drops an indignant F-bomb on some f***er.

David Bowie & The Story Of Ziggy Stardust

BBC Two, Thursday Dec 31, 12.40am

In a nutshell: The story of how one of the all-time pop greats came up with his most enduring creation.

Why it'll steal Christmas: Should make for perfect New Year's Day comedown telly on catch-up.

Neck a shot of eggnog every time... Bowie dons yet *another* intensely bananas early-'70s outfit.

PICS: GETTY, BBC PICTURES, DISNEY/LUCASFILM WORDS: JOE MADDEN

The Rich Kids Of Instagram: Cutting Edge

Channel 4, Monday Dec 21, 9pm

In a nutshell: Documentary on the hyper-privileged teens flaunting their lifestyles on Instagram.

Why it'll steal Christmas: As you sit shivering in your damp, rented flat, the rage this doc will induce should warm you enough to survive until you go back to your parents'.

Neck a shot of eggnog every time... you find yourself tearfully hurling abuse at the screen.

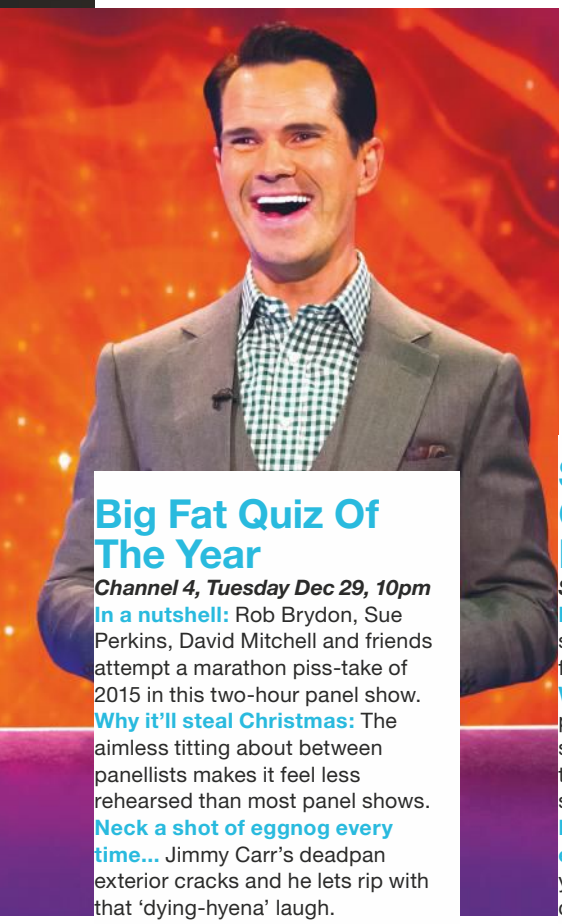
Bruce Springsteen: The Ties That Bind

BBC Four, Sunday Dec 20, 11pm

In a nutshell: New documentary in which Noo Joizy's favourite son looks back on the making of his classic 1980 double album 'The River'. Followed at 11.55pm by a typically sh*t-kicking concert film from the tour that followed.

Why it'll steal Christmas: It's the perfect time of year for heartfelt, irony-free rock'n'roll.

Neck a shot of eggnog every time... Bruce hollers "Hey!", "Woo!" or "Wellalrite!"



Big Fat Quiz Of The Year

Channel 4, Tuesday Dec 29, 10pm

In a nutshell: Rob Brydon, Sue Perkins, David Mitchell and friends attempt a marathon piss-take of 2015 in this two-hour panel show.

Why it'll steal Christmas: The aimless titting about between panellists makes it feel less rehearsed than most panel shows.

Neck a shot of eggnog every time... Jimmy Carr's deadpan exterior cracks and he lets rip with that 'dying-hyena' laugh.

Star Wars: Greatest Moments

Sky 1, Thursday Dec 24, 8pm

In a nutshell: What the title suggests, featuring contributions from celebrity fans and the actors.

Why it'll steal Christmas: It's perfect festive fare: dip in and out, so you can simultaneously enjoy the programme *and* destroy your six-year-old niece at Connect 4.

Neck a shot of eggnog every time... you manage to send your nerdy cousin into a rage by calling Chewbacca "Space Bear".

Pete Burns

All New Shocking Moments In Pop 2

Channel 5, Monday Dec 21, 9pm

In a nutshell: Solange kicking the sh*t out of Jay Z! Grace Jones kicking the sh*t out of talk-show host Russell Harty! George Michael kicking the sh*t out of his driving licence! Etc! Enjoy!

Why it'll steal Christmas: 'Cos it isn't Christmas until you've got slowly clattered watching a trashy, three-hour Channel 5 clipfest.

Neck a shot of eggnog every time... some D-list talking head offers a wild-eyed synopsis of a clip you've *just watched*.

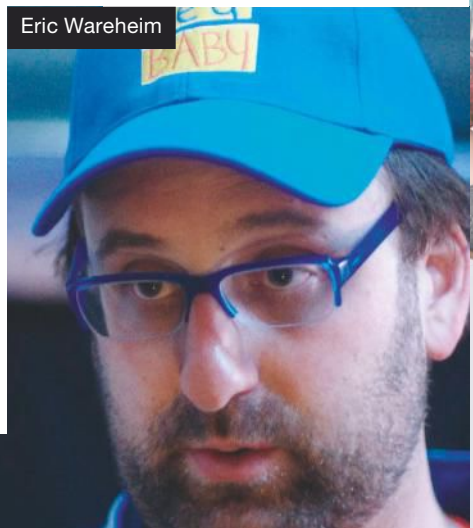
Tim & Eric's Bedtime Stories

Fox, Thursday Dec 24, 11.45pm

In a nutshell: UK premiere of the latest series from comedy weirdos Tim Heidecker and Eric Wareheim.

Why it'll steal Christmas: A demented parody of anthology series such as *The Twilight Zone* may not be the *most* Christmassy telly, but it *will* make for perfect drunken Xmas Eve viewing.

Neck a shot of eggnog every time... you spot a wig so ridiculous it makes you snort.



Eric Wareheim

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Under the RADAR

YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST

"We're giving people something to believe in" Tom Ogden

Blossoms (l-r): Myles Kellock, Joe Donovan, Tom Ogden, Josh Dewhurst, Charlie Salt

Blossoms

First Manchester, now the world: this indie-pop five-piece have the tunes to match their ambition

FOR THE RECORD, Blossoms hail from Stockport, not Manchester. Yet their frontman Tom Ogden exudes the sort of ambition typically associated with musical legends from the capital of the North. "We just want to be as big as we can," he says. "We don't wanna be underground. We wanna become a big band."

Tom points out, "There's no scene in Stockport," but his group enjoy a devoted following in Manchester, having inherited the streets once owned by The Stone Roses and Oasis. "Every 10 years Manchester produces a great band, and maybe it's time there's another one," he adds. "We're happy to step up and give people something to believe in."

There's Gallagher swag here, though Blossoms' latest EP 'Charlemagne' trades on glittering indie-pop, with more shimmering synths than crunching guitars. The five-piece formed in 2013 and found an unlikely residence in a scaffolding yard owned by bassist Charlie Salt's grandfather, using a back room as their rehearsal space. "It's freezing," says Tom, "but it's inspired us. We can make as much noise as we want."

James Skelly from returning indie heroes The Coral is producing the band's upcoming debut album (Tom promises it's "full of singles" and reckons it's due "around summertime"). Skelly was turned on to Blossoms by Alan Wills, owner of Deltasonic Records, who sadly died last year. The Coral singer also produced their 'Charlemagne' EP, whose eponymous lead track represents Blossoms' creative breakthrough.

Tom loves hearing 'Charlemagne' at Manchester's indie clubs. "I've been going to those clubs since I was 17, using our drummer's ID," he says. "Five years later, we're playing. It's surreal."

Blossoms have already sold out the 2,000-capacity Manchester Albert Hall, where they play in February. Tom may soon find he can't go clubbing without getting mobbed. **Jordan Bassett**

Best track

'Charlemagne'

A crystalline sliver of synthpop with a slinky bassline. Heartache has rarely sounded as sexy as this.

Details

FROM Stockport

LIVE
Dec 18 Oslo, London
Plus dates across January, February and March

FACT Blossoms just received a deserved nod on the BBC's Sound of 2016 longlist.

SOCIAL facebook.com/blossomsband

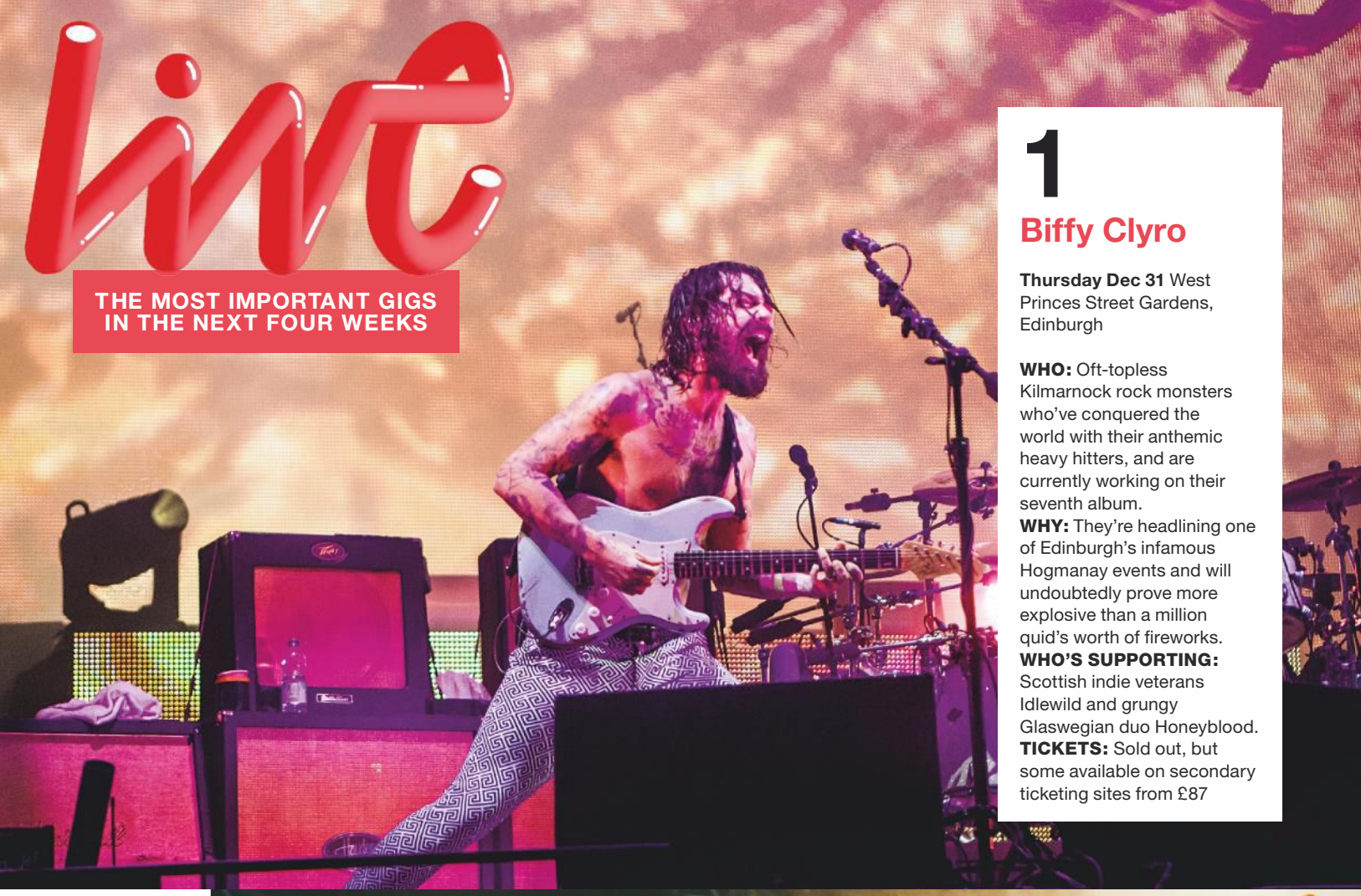
For more on Blossoms, head to NME.com

FOR FANS OF

CHARLOTTE PATMORE, DAVID ELLIS, KEVIN WESTENBERG

live

THE MOST IMPORTANT GIGS IN THE NEXT FOUR WEEKS



1

Biffy Clyro

Thursday Dec 31 West Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh

WHO: Oft-topless Kilmarnock rock monsters who've conquered the world with their anthemic heavy hitters, and are currently working on their seventh album.
WHY: They're headlining one of Edinburgh's infamous Hogmanay events and will undoubtedly prove more explosive than a million quid's worth of fireworks.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: Scottish indie veterans Idlewild and grungy Glaswegian duo Honeyblood.
TICKETS: Sold out, but some available on secondary ticketing sites from £87

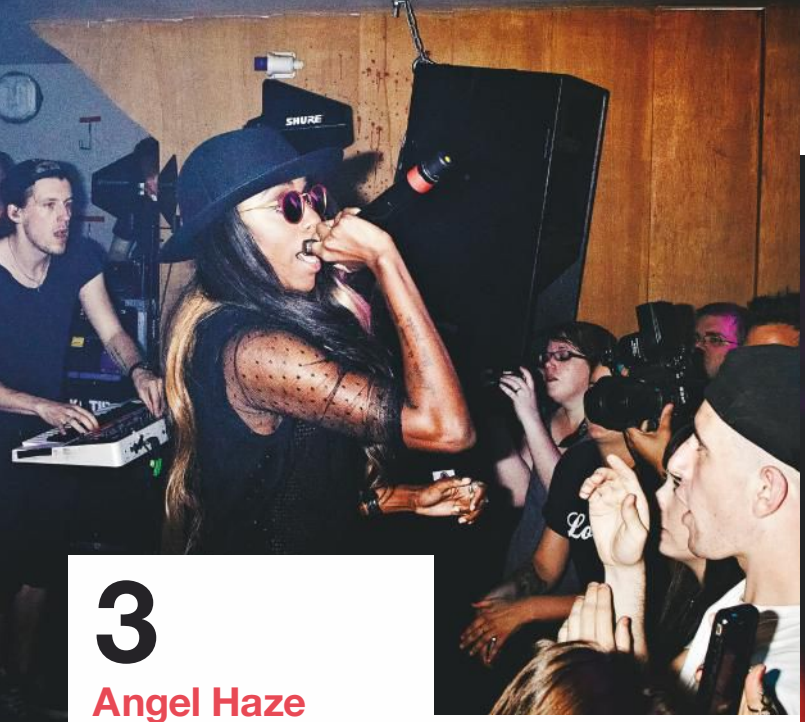
2

Future

Thursday Jan 7 O2 Apollo, Manchester
Friday 8 O2 Academy Brixton, London
Sunday 10 O2 Academy, Birmingham

WHO: Nayvadius DeMun Wilburn, Atlanta rapper and Drake collaborator on 'What A Time To Be Alive'.
WHY: Having conquered America, this promises to be his devastating boots-on-the-ground UK invasion. Expect his anti-punctuation anthem 'Fuck Up Some Commas' to sound transcendent reverberating around these big venues.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: No details yet.
TICKETS: £45.10-£61.87 from ticketweb.co.uk; London sold out

ANDREW FORD, JORDAN CURTIS HUGHES, ED MILES, REX, DANIEL TOPETE, EMPICS



3

Angel Haze

Tuesday Jan 12 Band On The Wall, Manchester
Wednesday 13 Belgrave Music Hall, Leeds
Thursday 14 O2 ABC2, Glasgow

WHO: Outspoken Detroit rapper who leaked her debut album 'Dirty Gold' in 2013 after a dispute with her label.

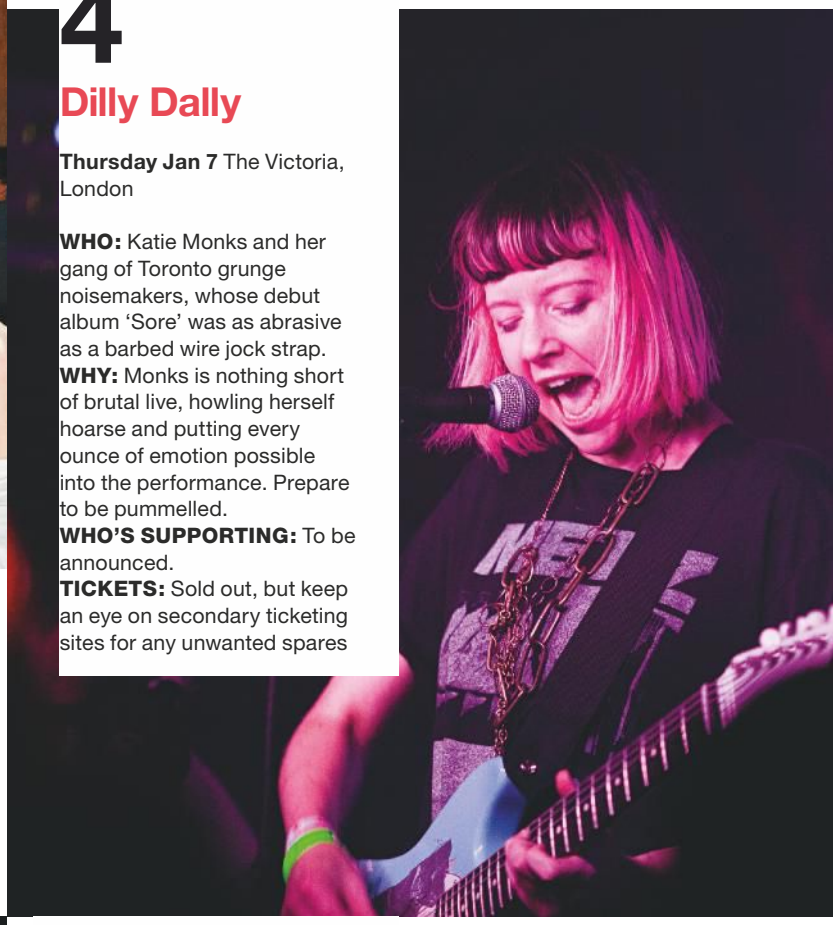
WHY: Her shows are raw and passionate, with Haze an empowering and powerful performer capable of inspiring vitriol and adoration in one performance.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: No details yet.
TICKETS: £13.75-£14 from NME.com/tickets; Glasgow £14.06 from ticketweb.co.uk

4

Dilly Dally

Thursday Jan 7 The Victoria, London

WHO: Katie Monks and her gang of Toronto grunge noisemakers, whose debut album 'Sore' was as abrasive as a barbed wire jock strap.
WHY: Monks is nothing short of brutal live, howling herself hoarse and putting every ounce of emotion possible into the performance. Prepare to be pummelled.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: To be announced.
TICKETS: Sold out, but keep an eye on secondary ticketing sites for any unwanted spares



5

Lethal Bizzle

Saturday Dec 19 Winter Gardens, Blackpool
Thursday 31 Fiction, Stoke-On-Trent

WHO: Grime kingpin and panel show ace face who first rose to fame as part of the More Fire Crew and with 2004 single 'Pow (Forward)'.

WHY: If you're looking for a party then Bizzle's bound to bring it, with the likes of recent single 'Fester Skank' guaranteed to incite mosh pits.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: Annie Mac, Duke Dumont, Danny Howard, Blonde, Craig David and more also play in Blackpool; Stoke-On-Trent line-up TBA.
TICKETS: £15-£46.75 from ents24.com

6

The Bohicas

Thursday Dec 31 KOKO, London

WHO: Leather-jacketed Domino signings with lip-curling riffs and early Arctic Monkeys attitude.

WHY: They're topping the bill at Club *NME*'s annual end-of-year shindig, which is always the wildest, messiest way to drink the whole of 2015 out of your memory.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: Fast-rising lad-rock quartet Vant.
TICKETS: £25.31 from ticketweb.co.uk

For tour news and live reviews go to NME.com

7

Cancer Bats

Monday Jan 11 Chinnery's, Southend
Tuesday 12 Wedgewood Rooms, Portsmouth
Wednesday 13 Concorde 2, Brighton
Thursday 14 The Waterfront, Norwich

WHO: Toronto punks who also operate as a Black Sabbath cover band called, oh yes, Bat Sabbath.
WHY: They once summoned the rock'n'roll stamina to play five ferocious shows in London in one day, so expect riotous sweatfests.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: To be announced.
TICKETS: £12.10-£12.65 from NME.com/tickets; Norwich £12.10 from ticketweb.co.uk; Southend sold out

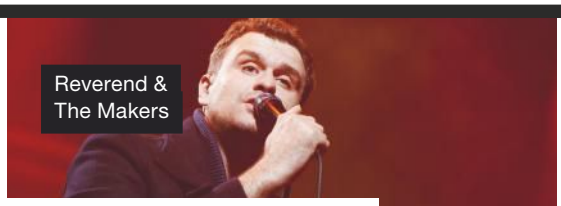
8

Oscar

Tuesday Jan 12 The Lexington, London

WHO: DIY bedroom-pop newcomer blessed with swooning melodies and a voice like the theatrical stepchild of The Magnetic Fields.
WHY: With his debut album due, Oscar is bound to hit 2016 like a runaway tanker of saccharine indie, so catch him while things are still 'intimate'.
WHO'S SUPPORTING: Spaced-out dance-tinged Londoners Pumarosa, Belfast pop five-piece Pleasure Beach.
TICKETS: £6.60 from wegottickets.com

The Enemy


Reverend & The Makers

JACK DANIEL'S
JACK ROCKS

Jack Rocks New Year's Eve spesh!

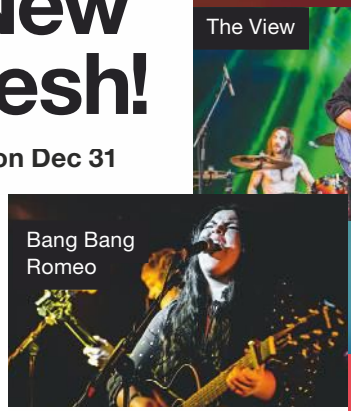
Four shows that'll bring the party vibes on Dec 31

IT'S THE PINNACLE OF THE party calendar, and with it comes enough clubs, gigs, pubs and house parties to give you the heebeegeebees. So why not let this series of Jack Rocks & This Feeling Present NYE events take care of business?

The Rifles, The Enemy
WHERE: Nambucca, London
WHY: Local London heroes The Rifles are joining forces with Coventry's finest The Enemy for a two pronged approach to partying in the capital this NYE, with gigs north and south of the river. The north London version takes place in legendary Holloway venue Nambucca. As for the south...

The Enemy, The Rifles
WHERE: Amersham Arms, London
WHY: The south London stage will happen over at New Cross's Amersham Arms. Expect rowdy singalongs, momentous moshpits and epic encores at both intimate venues, which boast the smallest stages you're likely to catch these two acts on.

The View, Tijuana Bibles
WHERE: King Tut's, Glasgow
WHY: Dundee dudes The View will ring in 2016 in the only way they know how – with a chaotic set full of indie anthems. Tijuana Bibles will bring some bluesy, leather-clad class to proceedings. **SOLD OUT**


Bang Bang Romeo

Reverend & The Makers, Bang Bang Romeo
WHERE: The Rocking Chair, Sheffield
WHY: Reverend & The Makers might be performing an acoustic set, but don't expect their NYE show to any less hectic. Bang Bang Romeo add Fleetwood Mac-ish sass.

The View

Tijuana Bibles

To see exclusive videos from the hottest Jack Rocks shows head over to NME.com/jackrocks

The Rifles

Best of the rest

Slaves
Fri Dec 18 Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells
Sun Jan 10 O2 Academy, Leeds
Mon 11 O2 ABC, Glasgow
Tue 12 O2 Academy, Liverpool
Thu 14 O2 Forum, London

VICTOR FRANKOWSKI, ANDREW FORD, DANNY PAYNE, WENN, GETTY, ANDREW HUGHES, PHOTOSHOT, JORDAN HUGHES

Autobahn
Sat Dec 19 Exchange Arts Centre, Keighley

Baby Strange
Sun Dec 20 Broadcast, Glasgow

Blossoms
Fri Dec 18 Oslo, London

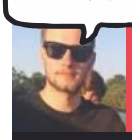
British Sea Power
Fri Dec 18 The Venue, Derby

The Charlatans
Fri Dec 18 O2 Academy, Liverpool
Sat Dec 19 O2 Academy Brixton, London

The Courteeners
Fri Dec 18 & Sat 19 O2 Apollo, Manchester

The Darkness
Sat 19 Dec O2 Academy, Oxford
Sun 20 Dec The Roundhouse, London

READER'S PICK



Mark, *18, Colchester @hoskin96*

Skepta and JME
Fri 18 O2 Academy Brixton, London
"It's guaranteed to be a celebration of UK music."

Diet Cig
Sun Jan 10 Broadcast, Glasgow
Wed Jan 13 Servant Jazz Quarters, London
Thu Jan 14 The Lexington, London

Enter Shikari
Fri Dec 18 The Limelight, Belfast

Henry Rollins
Sun Jan 10 St George's, Bristol
Mon Jan 11 Tyne Theatre & Opera House, Newcastle
Tue Jan 12 Bridgewater Hall, Manchester
Thu Jan 14 Barbican Centre, London

Hinds
Mon Jan 11 Ace Hotel, London

Jeffrey Lewis
Fri Dec 18 Arts Centre, Norwich
Sat Dec 19 Oslo, London

Kiran Leonard
Mon Jan 11 The Victoria, London
Tue Jan 12 The Albert, Brighton
Wed Jan 13 The Eagle Inn, Manchester
Thu Jan 14 The Hug & Pint, Glasgow

The Kooks
Fri Dec 18, Sat 19 & Sun 20 O2 Forum, London

Madonna
Sun Dec 20 SSE Hydro, Glasgow

Maximo Park
Fri Dec 18 O2 Institute, Birmingham
Sat Dec 19 Albert Hall, Manchester

Menace Beach
Fri Dec 18 The Hairy Dog, Derby

Nadine Shah
Sat Dec 19 The Phoenix, London

Nelly
Fri Dec 18 O2 Academy, Bristol

Panic! At The Disco
Tue Jan 12 O2 Academy Brixton, London

Reverend & The Makers
Thu Dec 31 The Rocking Chair, Sheffield

Skepta
Fri Dec 18 O2 Academy Brixton, London

The Twang
Sat Dec 19 O2 Academy, Birmingham

The View
Thu Dec 31 King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, Glasgow

Todd Terje
Thu Dec 31 Liquid Room, Edinburgh
Fri Jan 1 Secret Location, Aberdeen

Club NME NYE Ball
The Bohicas, Vant
Guest DJs: Mark Beaumont (*NME*), Ed Wilder, Alana B Devotion
Thursday 31 KOKO, London

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THE LEXINGTON

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PLUS GUESTS
THURSDAY 4 FEBRUARY
LONDON
XOYO

together PANGEA
FLESH
+ MOZES AND THE FIRSTBORN
FRIDAY 5 FEBRUARY
LONDON
MOTH CLUB

KID WAVE
PLUS GUESTS
SUNDAY 7 FEBRUARY
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100 CLUB

MYSTERY JETS
EKKAH
TUESDAY 16 FEBRUARY
LONDON
ELECTRIC BRIXTON

KING GIZZARD AND THE LIZARD WIZARD
PLUS GUESTS
THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY
LONDON
ELECTRIC BALLROOM

SWIM DEEP
PLUS GUESTS
WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY
LONDON
THE DOME

PUBLIC ACCESS T.V.
PLUS GUESTS
THURSDAY 25 FEBRUARY
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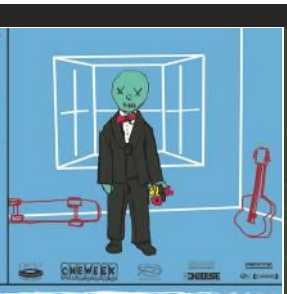

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SAT 20 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY3

FRI 26 OXFORD O2 ACADEMY2

SAT 27 LONDON O2 ACADEMY2 ISLINGTON

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What a year.

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15.05.15 – 16.05.15

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BRAND NEW

11.09.15

FLORENCE + THE MACHINE

21.09.15 – 25.09.15

THE WOMBATS

01.10.15

RUDIMENTAL

16.10.15

MAJOR LAZER

17.10.15

VANS WARPED TOUR

18.10.15

FAITHLESS

21.11.15 + 04.12.15

FRANK TURNER

26.11.15

CHVRCHES

27.11.15

BRING ME THE HORIZON

28.11.15

DISCLOSURE

01.12.15 – 03.12.15

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Soundtrack of my ~~life~~ CHRISTMAS

Russell Howard

Purveyor of *Good News* and stand-up guy

The coolest Christmas song

JULIAN CASABLANCAS

I Wish It Was Christmas Today

"It's a jingly jangly foot stamping belter! Put it on and I guarantee you'll be in the mood for festive high jinks. I always imagine the video would feature a load of elves slugging on whisky and Santa rolling a joint."

The song that sums up how I felt about Christmas as a kid

THE 5.6.7.8'S

Woo-Hoo

"Santa's beeeeeeeeennnnnn!!!!!! My parents looked shattered and I was bouncing around like Tigger on Red Bull, punching the air with delight as I opened glorious presents from the '90s. Global Hypercolour T-shirts, black jeans with red pockets and a Sony Discman. Remember those? You had to hold them flat like you were a funky butler."

The best Christmas song ever made

THE POGUES

Fairytale Of New York

"It's a cliché but it really is exceptional. What I love most is every year it comes round we all fall in love with it again and none of us know the lyrics. We just mumble along and feel warm inside, which is odd given that the song is essentially listening to a row."

The song to play whilst opening presents

"Well to be honest my dad normally controls the tunes early doors. Do we listen to hymns or carols in the Howard household? Do we f**k! We listen to the godawful sh*t that my dad listens to at his spinning class. Last year it was that song that goes *"I just wanna make you sweat!"* I mean it doesn't get creepier than your dad singing that at you."

The song for Christmas Eve with my mates

PHARRELL WILLIAMS

Happy

"This is the true meaning of Christmas, getting sh*tfaced with my friends. Garish jumpers, slamming down shots, giggling like hyenas as we wander down memory lane. Also according to one of my mates I look like all the Minions."

The song that reminds me of my worst Christmas

ENYA

Book Of Days

"My brother got her album for Christmas in 1993 and he was f***ing delighted. He was 11 and I don't know if you've ever heard a pre-pubescent boy warble Enya's songs – it sounds like someone is abusing a wookie. He played it all Christmas until the CD mysteriously broke…"

Go to NME.com for more Soundtracks

Best song to play during the meal

HOUSE OF LOVE

Shine On

"I love Christmas dinner, I mean pigs in blankets? Wow! Some genius looked at a sausage and went, 'It's good but it could do with a waistcoat made of bacon.' Musically you need something warm and fuzzy… I reckon 'Shine On' by House Of Love. Sing along as you stuff yourself. Bliss!"

The song that sums up my family at Christmas

THE PRODIGY

Out Of Space

"*'I'll take your brain to another dimension/Pay close attention.*' This line sums up my mum more than any song. Some of the things that tumble out of mothers' mouths at Christmas are exceptional. It's like they're sat there going, 'Right, I've had some gin! None of you are allowed to leave and these are all the mental things I've been saving up all year.'"

Russell's *A Gert Lush Christmas* is on BBC Two at 9pm on Boxing Day. His new stand-up tour, *Round The World* is on sale now. Tickets: russell-howard.co.uk

A Christmas thank you

Thank you, from the bottom of our greedy hearts, to Just Eat, for sorting us out with a large number of pizzas and katsu curries for the NME Christmas party. Every single bit was demolished. See you in January.

JUST EAT

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